

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action has rejected claims 3, 4 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph and claims 14 – 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). Claims 1, and 5 – 11 are allowed.

Although Applicants neither acquiesce nor agree with the Examiner's characterization of the prior art or the content of the unallowed claims, Applicants have cancelled unallowed claims 14 – 17 in the interests of speedy allowance.

Applicants will address the § 112 rejections on claims 3 and 4 and 13 below. In light of Applicants' amendment and remarks, Applicants believe these claims to now be allowable along with claims 1 and 5 – 11.

§ 112 Rejections

Claims 3, 4 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Applicants have amended claim 3 as the Examiner suggests. Applicants and their attorney thank the Examiner for his helpful suggestion.

Claims 4 and 13 are rejected on the recitation of the limitation "step (d)." Applicants thank the Examiner for his close review of the claims. Claims 4 and 13 contain a typographical error. "Step (d)" should now be "step (c)."

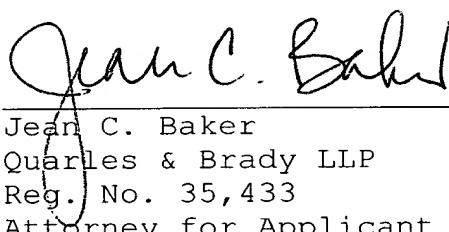
Appl. No. 09/970,382
Amdt. Dated September 30, 2003
Reply to Office Action of July 1, 2003

Applicants believe that claims 1, 3, 4, 5 - 11 and 13 are allowable and look forward to early receipt of a Notice of Allowance. If further discussion or information is required, the Examiner is invited to telephone the below-identified attorney. No fee is believed necessary to enter this amendment. However, if one is necessary, please charge Deposit Account 17-0055.

Respectfully submitted,

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